A

REMONSTRANCE

AGAINST THE

POSTSCRIPT TO THE REPORT OF

MR. JOHN RENNIE,

CIVIL ENGINEER,

CONCERNING THE

DRAINAGE OF THE EAST, WEST,

AND

WILDMORE FENS,

IN THE

County of Lincoln.

ADDRESSED TO THE

PROPRIETORS OF THE EAST FEN,

AND OF

EAST HOLLAND, LINCOLNSHIRE.

BY A HOLLAND WATCHMAN.

SOLD BY RIVINGTONS, LONDON;

AND THE BOOKSELLERS IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

1800.

Charade; from the Vicar of — to his son at — School

My First néer fails to set his face
Against the rising Sun:
And yet receives him with good grace,
His daily course being run.
My Next I shall with pleasure enter,
My prospects being much brighter;
If e'er his Majesty shall venture
T'adorn me with a Mitre.
My Whole contains a mighty store of learning
Where some, fair prizes; others, rods are earning.

On the death of an old Jew Grocer.

How think you Abraham in his Trade went on?
Millions of plums he must have gain'd but one.

Answer.

I think he went on well. Give me one plum,
Millions of puddings rich I'll make for all that come.

Charade.

My First, in Latin, I do hope to see you;
My Next, an English Measure is of Liquor:
My Whole, a poet is; if you don't guess him;
Then ice, of three months frost, your head is thicker

A

REMONSTRANCE,

&c. &c.

May 7, 1800.

GENTLEMEN,

A DESIGN of greater magnitude, and promiſing greater benefit to perſons of all ranks among us, never occupied the minds of Lincolnſhire men, than the preſent deſign of draining and cultivating thoſe immenſe waſtes, THE THREE FENS; the deplorable ſtate of which has ſo long diſgraced our county. Your attention, and that of all conſiderate perſons, who have any preſent, or reverſionary intereſt in this diſtrict, muſt

muſt be ſtrongly attracted towards this great deſign. Much diſcuſſion of it, written, as well as verbal, is to be expected and wiſhed; and the more it is inveſtigated, the more juſtice will be done, in my opinion, to *your* eſtates. Intereſts very diſcordant, and totally oppoſite, will doubtleſs be at variance on this important occaſion. To reconcile all ſuch differences, would be a very pleaſant employment to any benevolent man; and it is eaſy to ſay, and no one will diſpute it, how much it is the advantage of all parties to encourage ſuch reconciliations. But as benevolence, if not guided by diſcretion, degenerates into a pernicious weakneſs; and as he would little deſerve the title of a charitable man, who ſhould laviſh his money upon every ſturdy beggar that demanded it; ſo in the preſent caſe, it is neceſſary that we ſhould *regulate* our benevolent

volent affections, by reflecting deeply upon our paramount obligation to procure and render *juſtice* to all men.

With feelings thus correcting, and I truſt improving each other, I enter upon an enquiry concerning *one point only*, (in which you, gentlemen, are moſt eſſentially intereſted,) among the many difficult matters which ariſe in this important buſineſs. I ſhall conſider myſelf as acting the part of an honeſt and good neighbour, and as promoting effectually the general deſign, by demonſtrating to you, that *certain intereſts do not admit of reconciliation*; and that all attempts to accompliſh it, are vain and chimerical. The deduction will be, that neither of theſe intereſts ought to be *ſacrificed* to the other; but that each party concerned ſhould have that which is juſtly due to him, and no more.

As

As no honeſt man will deſire to conteſt theſe principles, or this concluſion, and no other man will openly dare to do it, I may proceed to ſtate the queſtion, —Whether it be practicable to drain the Eaſt Fen, and the Eaſt Holland towns, which together are more than thirty thouſand acres, by Maud Foſter drain?

In proving this ſcheme to be impracticable, I ſhall at preſent reſt my evidence ſolely upon Mr. Rennie's report. If his ſecond thoughts, contained in eight lines, are not altogether illuſory, I ſhall err, indeed; but my error will be of his own creating.

Conſidering you, Gentlemen, as my *judge and jury*, I ſhall plead my cauſe in the way which is uſual before thoſe reſpectable perſonages. Since other pleaders therefore, when they do not care a ſtraw about the iſſue of trials, think it decent

decent to appear very warm in them; ſo, as *I* am much in earneſt, a little warmth may, I hope, be conceded to me; which I ſhall endeavour to confine within the bounds of civility; thereby ſetting an example, which, to *ſome perſons*, may not be unimproving.

After this opening of my caſe, I proceed to call my evidence, and then to remark upon it.

Mr. JOHN RENNIE, CIVIL ENGINEER, AND HIS TWO SURVEYORS:

Page 7, line 14, "The general ſurface of the low lands of the Weſt and Wildmore Fens, *except No Man's Friend*, are *about one height*; and *therefore* they can be drained by one outfall."

Page 11, line 23. "*Had* the lands in the Eaſt Fen lain about the ſame height as in the Weſt and Wildmore Fens; and *had* proper drains been

made, to convey the water to Collin's Bridge, the whole would have been drained completely, as they are now imperfectly, through one outfall, as well as the greateſt part of the Eaſt Holland towns: all of which towns may be ſaid now to drain through Maud Foſter, except, &c."

Page 12, line 15. "The general ſurface of the Eaſt Fen and Wrangle Common, is about 8 feet above the ſill of Maud Foſter; of courſe there is only 2 feet of fall, at an ordinary low water neaptide. If the general diſtance of the Fen were to be taken at 13 miles from Maud Foſter, there would remain the fall of 1 inch, and $\frac{8}{10}$ of an inch, per mile; but, if the extreme points of the Eaſt Fen are taken, the diſtance is about 16 miles, which leaves only 1 inch $\frac{5}{10}$ per mile; *it is therefore evident, that, were the Eaſt Fen waters to be conducted to the ſame*

ſame gout as thoſe of Wildmore and the Weſt Fens are propoſed to be, they would be frequently over-rode; and, although ſluices might be placed, to prevent the water from being forced back into the Fen, yet *the gates would continue ſo long ſhut, that it would accumulate in the Fen and drown it. From theſe facts, it appears evident to me, that no good drainage, from the Eaſt Fen, or Wrangle Common, can be effected through Maud Foſter, unleſs* by an improvement of Boſton-Haven, which is much to be wiſhed, the gout could be lowered."

Page 13, line 20. "On conſidering the whole of theſe reaſons, it occurred to me, that *the only effectual place, through which the Eaſt Fen, and the low grounds in the Eaſt Holland towns,* could be *drained, is Fiſh Toft, or rather lower than where the preſent gout is ſituated.* From the ſurvey that has been taken of Boſton-Haven, it

appears, that the ſill of the preſent ſmall gout at Fiſh Toft lies at the height of 4 feet above the ſill of Maud Foſter; but the bottom of the river is 2 feet 6 inches lower than the bottom at Maud Foſter; and there being very few ſhoals or ſand-banks to obſtruct the outfall between Fiſh Toft and the Bay, the ſurface of the water in the river at the preſent gout is always low, *i. e.* 4 feet 1 inch lower than at Maud Foſter: if, therefore, a new gout, of a ſufficient capacity, was eſtabliſhed, about a quarter of a mile below the preſent gout at Fiſh Toft, where the ſurface of the water is ſtill lower, and a good drain made from thence into the Eaſt Fen, having proper ſide-drains to communicate with it, the whole would be completely drained, except *a very few acres of pits.*"

Page 14, line 17. " As the new drain, leading to Fiſh Toft gout, will interſect the drains which now convey the waters from the Eaſt Holland towns to Maud Foſter, it will be neceſſary that the drainage of theſe towns ſhould be made through the ſame leading drain and outfall, or by *a ſeparate cut, which is the beſt plan*, but it would be very expenſive."

Page 15, line 3. " The expence of the new cut will be conſiderable, as appears by eſtimate No. III; $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles of it requiring to be cut in ground from 15 to 18 feet high; and the other 4 miles, from 10 to 12 feet high; but the *excellent drainage*, which will be obtained by this means, will, I truſt, *more than compenſate the expence*."

Page 16, line 18. " As to the outfall, there can be little doubt, that the quantity of water, which will be conducted to Fiſh Toft new gout by this ſcheme, will

will be ſufficient to keep it open. For, as not only the whole land in the Eaſt Fen, amounting to 12,424 acres, will drain through this, *but alſo above* 26,000 *ſtatute acres in the Eaſt Holland towns*, making together 38,424 *acres*; there might beſides, if wanted, be water thrown by Hagnaby Beck, and from the Catch-water drain, propoſed to ſurround the Eaſt-Fen, which would greatly aſſiſt it; but as there are few obſtructions exiſting between Fiſh Toft and the ſea, there will be very little danger of the outfall being choaked."

So far Mr. Rennie's Report is ſatisfactory, as to the drainage of the Eaſt Fen. He adds, that £50,000 might be ſaved by the improvement of Boſton-Haven; but he neither ſhows how, nor gives any calculation of the expence of this improvement, nor ſuggeſts by whom the main part of ſuch expence can be de-

defrayed. We may therefore proceed to the moſt extraordinary part of this Report,— the N. B. (or poſtſcript, or ſecond thoughts,) at page 17.

" ON reconſidering the ſubject of the Eaſt Fen drainage, I *think* if the *pits* are *entirely* given up, and ſuffered to remain covered with water, the *other parts might* be *tolerably* drained through Maud Foſter: the preſent height of the water at this gout would *not* be ſufficiently low for that purpoſe; but, as I *expect* the quantity of water, which will be conducted to it by the ſcheme of drainage laid down for the Weſt and Wildmore Fens, will lower the ſurface of the water there; it is *probable*, the outfall may be ſo improved, as *even to anſwer for the Eaſt Fen*, except the pits before mentioned; and, as the ſaving will be immenſe, this matter, I think, merits further inveſtigation."

Men

Men of *Eaſt Fen, and of* Eaſt Holland! This N. B. muſt ſtrongly attract your attention, if you feel any concern about your property: for, what does Mr. Rennie aſſure, or even promiſe to you? Does he ſay, that your lands ſhall be as well drained in all ſeaſons, as Wildmore and the Weſt Fens? No! Does he ſay, that even in ſummer they ſhall never be ſuddenly drowned? He does not undertake even that. What then does he hold forth to you? I will *ſift* his words; and leave you to judge, whether, like the wheat of the late unfortunate harveſt, they do not conſiſt of much bran, and little, or no good flour. The ſubſtance of them is this: 'I *find* (ſays Mr. Rennie, in effect,) that I *muſt not* ſpeak ſo of the Eaſt Fen and Maud Foſter; I muſt give up my ſurveyors and their levels, though no other levels have been taken. I *muſt no longer* maintain, that

the

the lands in the Eaſt Fen do *not* lie about the ſame height as in the Weſt and Wildmore;—that it is *evident*, were the Eaſt Fen waters to be conducted to the ſame gout, as thoſe of Wildmore and the Weſt Fens are propoſed to be, they would be frequently *over-rode;*—that it appears *evident* to me, that *no* good drainage, from the Eaſt Fen or Wrangle Common, can be effected through Maud Foſter;—that the only effectual place, through which the Eaſt Fen, and the low grounds in the Eaſt Holland towns, could be drained, is Fiſh Toft, or rather lower than where the preſent gout is ſituated;—that a ſeparate cut is the beſt plan;—that the excellent drainage, which will be obtained by this means, will *more than* compenſate the expence. No! No! No! I ſtand *corrected.* All my levels, and thoſe of my levellers, are to be levelled at

Maud

Maud Foſter gout. You ſhall all of you, in *Eaſt Fen, and* Eaſt Holland, drain there, or be drowned;—and be drowned if you do drain there. But, for your comfort, give up only the Eaſt Fen *deeps* (that is, 3000 acres) to wild-fowl for the London market; to fiſh for the Boſton market; to reed for your houſes, which will be covered with tiles or ſlate; and to *bumbles* for your chairs, which (like thoſe of other good farmers) will be made of horſe-hair and mahogany: and then, as I *expect* certain things, which I cannot promiſe, and for which I give no reaſon,—I think it is *probable*—that you may be drained *tolerably.*"

Men of *Eaſt Fen, and of* Eaſt Holland! awake! beſtir yourſelves! aſſert your own right intereſt; and inſiſt upon equal juſtice with your neighbours. The conſideration of *your* drainage is poſtponed to an early day in Auguſt. *The game of Anton's gout is about to be repeated at Maud Foſ-*

ter;

ter: and, as Wildmore and Weſt Fens are now drained at the former, juſt ſo will your Fen, and your preſent low lands, be drained at the other. Mr. Rennie himſelf ſhall deſcribe the upſhot of that game to you: (p. 4.)—"Deſcription of the preſent drainage of Wildmore Fen, and of the Weſt Fen.—The preſent drainage of Wildmore Fen, and the greateſt part of the Weſt Fen, is made through Anton's gout, about two miles and a half above Boſton; the other part of the Weſt Fen is made through Maud Foſter: and the water not only which falls on the Fen itſelf, but the greateſt part of the water from the high country above, lying in the Lordſhips of Kirkby, Reveſby, Mareham, Tomby, and Coningſby, diſcharge into the Fens, and paſs to the Witham by this gout, which has a ſingle pair of doors, with a clear opening of fourteen feet

two inches, an opening which is not one half of what is neceſſary to diſcharge the water which is now conducted to it; beſides, *in times of flood it is over-rode by the Witham, which frequently keeps its doors ſhut for weeks together.*" *So*, gentlemen, will *your* waters be over-rode by thoſe of the Weſt and Wildmore Fens, and Catch-water drains, united. *No Man's Friend* (a very ominous name to you) and "the general ſurface of the Eaſt Fen and Wrangle Common," are preciſely 8 feet *each* above the ſill of Maud Foſter; and each is one foot lower than the general ſurface of the Weſt and Wildmore Fens. Pages 7 and 12. *You cannot*, therefore, be drained by this route better than *No Man's Friend* will be, the very ſink of Wildmore.

The queſtion is not, whether "a few acres of *the deepeſt pits*," (to which I ſee no

no objection) but whether *three thouſand acres* (as you have been told from the higheſt authority) ſhall be left under water juſt at your door. With ſuch a neighbour as this vaſt collection of waters, could you plough and ſow with any aſſurance of reaping? Or do you chooſe to reap (as in the neighbourhood of the Witham, laſt harveſt,) ſtanding up to the middle, and clipping off the ears of corn, wherever they peeped above the ſurface? Is there not very evident danger, that water covering three thouſand acres, will frequently be ſo ſwollen, as to quickly ſpread itſelf over more than three times three thouſand?

As to the *low grounds of your old incloſures*, they are likely to fare not a jot better than your Fen. They will be no more ſafe; if Mr. Rennie's report may be credited, at p. 12, l. 15, &c. I

do not indeed adviſe you, to carry either theſe, or your Fen waters, to a different outfall *at the ſea.* I am aware of the neceſſity of being united *there.* But if this union ſhall take place a little below Fiſhtoft, and your waters roll together to the bay; then the power of removing the *ſand-banks* (p. 2, l. 20.) will be juſt as great, as if the union had happened at Maud Foſter; and you will not be over-ridden either by higher waters, or richer men.

Upon the whole, I ſubmit to you, gentlemen, whether Mr. Rennie has not *proved* by his *levels,* (the only rational proof) "which he believes have been taken with great accuracy," (p. 5.) that *Eaſt Fen cannot* be drained by Maud Foſter; and whether he has not *concluded,* in his nota-bene, (without any *corrective* proof or argument, except an unſup-

unſupported *expectation*) that it *probably can*. This is a ſpecimen of logic, which might come, characteriſtically, from a native of that weſtern kingdom, with which our's will doubtleſs ſpeedily, and I truſt happily, be united; but it is not creditable, I muſt ſay, to the ſagacity either of an Engliſh, or a Scotch Engineer. If the Eaſt Fen, and the country adjacent, (amounting to more than 30,000 acres) *can* be drained by Maud Foſter, all the levels that have been taken loſe all their credit; and the levellers muſt look to their's, as they are able. *They* and *you* are equally abandoned by this poſtſcript. But I truſt, that Mr. Rennie's firſt thoughts will turn out (by his own future confeſſion) to be better than his ſecond; in ſpite of the ancient proverb, by which alone the latter are at preſent protected. Do not then ſuffer yourſelves to be cajoled by any man's *thinking*, and

expec-

expecting, and *wiſhing*; nor by his *ifs*, and *probables*, and *tolerables*: but reflect, whether theſe afford any valid ſecurity for your eſtates; whether you are not in the way to be *ſacrificed* to other intereſts; and whether there is not *great danger*, at the leaſt, that in very wet ſummers your lands may be drained imperfectly, and in wet winters not at all.

A Holland Watchman.

May 14, 1800.

A VOLUNTEER Report, by Mr. William Pocklinton, has juſt iſſued from the preſs; in which, the neceſſary expence of draining the three Fens is reduced, from £185,170, (Mr. Rennie's eſtimate,) to £56,102. There muſt be grievous

grievous errors on one ſide or the other. Betwixt theſe two " diſagreeing doctors," in the art of evacuating water, I do not preſume to " decide." But, with great reſpect for Mr. Pocklinton's good intentions, his 40 years *ſtudy* of drainage, his local knowledge, and his " diſintereſtedneſs of conduct," I muſt lament that he ſhould have committed himſelf in this buſineſs. He is " decidedly of opinion, that it is extremely practicable to drain the Eaſt Fen, and the Eaſt Holland towns, together with the Weſt and Wildmore Fens, moſt completely and effectually, by Maud Foſter." Page 1, line 34. And upon what does he found this opinion? Upon a ſurvey and levels? No ſuch things appear to have been taken: but upon " *a certain conviction in his own mind,* that the lands in the Eaſt Fen *(except the deeps, creeks, and ſykes)* are *as high* as the *low*

lands

lands in the West and Wildmore Fens." Page 1, line 49. Then, if Mr. Pocklinton's "certain conviction" be worth any thing, Mr. Rennie's levels are worth nothing. Perhaps the proprietors of East Fen and East Holland will not stake their estates upon either; but will look out for the advice of men, who will abide (as Mr. Rennie does *not*) by what they have proved; and who will prove (as Mr. Pocklinton has *not done*) something more, than "their own certain convictions in their own minds."

BRITISH MUSEUM 100077

Printed by T. Rickaby, Peterborough-court, *London.*